

Interstate Commerce Commission

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

Though the Interstate Commerce Commission has the reputation of some fourteen billion dollars' worth of property invested in the railroads of this country, and has been in the spot light for years, its workings are understood in only the most general way. Congress established the commission and gave it its powers, but the people of the country could not find a seat unless they paid extra to ride in the Pullmans. A traveler who knew something of what the commission could do, chanced to ride on that train one day. He could not find a seat during the whole journey for himself or his semi-invalid wife. He asked the conductor if his train was usually so crowded, and was answered in the affirmative. The traveler gave the Interstate Commerce Commission the facts, and within a week there was another coach added to that train; and ever since the people are getting the seats they pay for.

One of the greatest troubles the commission has is to make the railroads give equitable rates to noncompeting points. Until recently shippers of cattle and grain in Western Wisconsin were obliged to ship their consignments West to St. Paul and thence back over the same line by the very station where they originated, in order to get the most advantageous rate. In other words, the rate to Chicago direct from the shipping point was higher than the rate for carrying it a hundred miles or more West, and thence back again right past the starting point. Danville, Va., had the same sort of trouble.

Under the old interstate commerce law, passed in 1887, the railroads did pretty much as they pleased. They did not have any too much respect for it, since it never did more harm than to give their attorneys a chance to earn some of their salary. But under the new one they are usually pretty sure that the outcome of a complaint is going to be favorable before they will allow the matter to come to a formal hearing. Under the old law, as soon as a ruling was made by the commission, the railroads carried the case to court, but under the new law it has been different. In the year and more since the reorganization there has been but a single decision of the commission appealed from, and that is an appeal by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad from a decision on a discrimination it was alleged to have made against independent oil men in favor of Standard Oil. Moreover, there are many instances where formal complaints have been made and afterward dismissed, "the defendant having voluntarily agreed to the conditions sought to be imposed on it by the commission." Out of a total of about 400 formal complaints filed since the new law took effect, there have been some forty such compromises. This "don't shoot; I'll come down" policy of the railroads argues for the justice of the complaints in those cases.

When a formal complaint is filed with the commission the newspapers get it, for on the desk in the office of the chief clerk the correspondents find the complaints filed for that day. But back of this there is much that even the wide-awake newspaper men do not know. Before a complaint is filed in a formal way there is an informal one. The man who thinks he needs to resort to the haven of refuge for redress knows that there is a committee of counsel who will take up the matter. If such an adjustment, satisfactory to both parties, can be made, that is the end of the matter; the difficulty is adjusted informally and the world never knows that there was such a case. But if the efforts at compromise fail, then the matter comes up in the shape of a formal complaint, and the correspondents get it. The number of complaints adjusted in this way is greater than the number settled through formal hearings and decisions. An official of the commission who has to do with the correspondence in these cases, says there are about six cases settled in this way where there is only one formal complaint. A report of the commission shows that during the past year there were over 2,300 informal, and only 400 formal complaints.

The humblest citizen of the land finds that the commission gives the same attention to his complaint as it does to that of the wealthiest corporation. The different cases range in importance from those involving a few dollars to others representing as many millions. One of the most interesting cases was that of the Loop Creek Colliery Company, of West Virginia, against the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, in which the coal company sought to compel the railroad to give it as good rates as it gave to other shippers on its own line. Standard that way, the case appeared to be a perfectly uninteresting one. But the Loop Creek Colliery Company has back of it the new one-hundred-million-dollar, built-without-a-bond railroad, which H. H. Rogers and others are constructing from Norfolk, Va., to the Great Lakes, and thence probably West to the Pacific. It is a case of two gigantic corporations fighting the preliminary skirmish for the control of the coal fields of West Virginia. In the arguments the colliery company was represented by its counsel to be a perfectly harmless little coal company, with its life in danger of being crushed out by a great railroad, backed by the powerful Pennsylvania system. On the other hand, the counsel for the defendant represented the colliery company to be the impersonation of the big interests that were building the new Virginia railroad, which eventually threatened to swallow up the defendant, and might also in the end make a break for the powerful Pennsylvania system.

Here is a sample complaint of an ordinary citizen. A gentleman from Tennessee went to the Jamestown Exposition with his wife. He bought a ticket from the Louisville and Nashville Railroad which entitled him to passage from Norfolk to Washington on the steamer, including sleeping accommodations. He could not get the berth he had paid for, and the commission will find the reason why. In this case his recourse will be on the railroad selling him the ticket, and the commission will take it up informally by correspondence and see if the matter cannot be adjusted without the filing of a formal complaint.

There is another complaint illustrative of what can be done by the average citizen in protecting his own rights and those of the traveling public generally. A gentleman residing in Washington recently bought transportation for his wife to the Pacific Coast. He wanted it by way of Portland to Seattle. The ticket agent said he could not sell it that way; that she would have to go to Portland and buy the ticket to Seattle from there. She did this, but was afterward informed by a relative who was a railroad official that her ticket should have read from Washington to Seattle, via Portland. He took her husband to this effect, and he wrote it up with the railroad to recover the extra fare paid. The correspondence grew so voluminous and interstate commerce commission to find out what it meant. They are now trying to straighten out the matter out.

GIFTS FROM PANAMA CANAL EMPLOYEES.



PRESENTED TO JOHN F. STEVENS.

John F. Stevens, one of the vice presidents of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, and former chief engineer of the Panama Canal, has received three handsome gifts from the employees on the isthmus as a testimonial of their regard and admiration. Mr. Stevens' service on the canal work extended over the period when the lock type was determined upon, and the work given a successful start. His leadership was supported by remarkable loyalty among all classes employed, and a committee of canal officials purchased, with the funds subscribed by the employees, a magnificent silver service, each piece of which is engraved with the Stevens monogram; a gold repeater watch, and a ring with a unique setting containing a two-carat diamond. The tray of the silver set is engraved "Mr. Stevens, from canal employees," and the silver is engraved with a scene showing the completed canal, with the locks and dams and other characteristic features.

ASSIGNED TO THE CENTRAL

McKinley Manual Freshmen Told to Report There on Monday.

Three Rooms Available for Classes as Study Halls—Bench Work at Training School.

Those applicants for the first year of the McKinley Manual Training School who reported again at the Business High School yesterday morning were informed of the new arrangements by which they are to be accommodated in three rooms of the Central and in rooms opposite the McKinley school on Seventh street north. They were instructed to report again on Monday morning at 9 o'clock. It may be several days before the rented rooms are available, in which case a number of pupils will be accommodated temporarily in the assembly room of the Business school.

This method of settling a question which for several days has proved most vexatious to the school authorities was announced yesterday by Supt. Chancellor, following a final conference with President James F. Oyster, of the board of education, and Dr. George E. Myers, principal of the McKinley Manual Training School.

The order transferring sixty pupils who heretofore attended the Central to the

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Sweet Misses, Pretty Maids, and Stately Matrons Examine Artistic Collection of the Season's Latest Styles in Millinery's Headgear, Many of Them Direct from "Gay Paree."

A maze of mirrors, flanked by palms, ferns, clusters of golden-rod and cut flowers, and standing before a multitude of the handsomest of women, trying on the most stunning hats that ever emanated from the creative brain of the milliner, poet, and artist, this is an impressive scene. The picture that presented itself at the opening of the millinery department of Woodward & Lothrop yesterday, when hundreds of sweet girls and attractive young ladies, handsome women, and elderly matrons, all with an eye to the most fashionable, the most becoming, the most stylish in new fall and winter hats, crowded the show rooms of that popular establishment from early morning until the close of the day.

It was indeed a rare treat that presented itself to the eye from an artistic viewpoint. The harmony of color, the conception of design, the combination of both in the final idea of the hat, the sympathy of flowers, of feathers, of colors and shapes appealed strongly to those patrons who know what's what in the line of exclusive headgear.

Season's Styles Many. A bewildering, though harmonious, array of purples, greens, browns, and wine comprise the colors predominating in picture hats, velvet hats, silk hats, satin hats, and felts, all of which are the proper career this season.

Rich, glossy, gracefully drooping ostrich plumes hold supreme sway as "the thing" in the line of giving the hat that much-sought exclusive effect. Fancy feathers, wings, flowers, and ribbons are also used to fine advantage, as well as fancy buckles and pins, and other accessories. The art of producing artistic flowers for millinery purposes has reached a state of perfection that it requires the eye of an expert to tell the difference between nature's own product and man's handwork. The flowers used in the Woodward & Lothrop millinery display are such perfect counterparts of Mother Nature's own blossoms and blooms that if it were not for the fragrance of the rose, the violet, and other children of the garden, the field, and meadow, they would pass muster for the genuine article, even to the eye of the initiated. The texture and fiber is of the most ethereal, the colors the most delicate and natural, the designs beautiful, and the green of the leaves refreshing to the eye.

Comfort for Their Patrons. The display is arranged to the best possible advantage, plenty of floor space and a multiplicity of mirrors affording the patrons no matter how numerous, ample opportunity to study the season's array at leisure. Furthermore, the department is in charge of a picked corps of assistants, who thoroughly appreciate the various tastes and inclinations of the visitors. It goes without saying that the latest Paris style has been followed; that the art of the capital on the subject of the hat is represented by rare specimens, and that the creations of the millinery department of Woodward & Lothrop receive the greatest praise from all sides.

HEARING IS POSTPONED.

Civil Service Examination Case to Come Up Next Friday. The hearing set for yesterday in the case of Dr. Harrison and others against the United States Civil Service Commission has been postponed until next Friday. Counsel were not prepared yesterday and the answer of the commission has not been filed. Dr. Harrison seeks to prevent the Civil Service Commission from holding examinations at the instance of the District Commissioner in order to secure an eligible list from which appointments may be made to fill minor District positions. The complainants declare that the commission is exceeding its lawful authority, which they claim is confined to the holding of examinations for positions under the Federal Government.

A NOVEL SHIRT WAIST.

2652

YOUTH STABS COMPANION IN DISPUTE AS TO WEIGHT OF VICTIM. New York, Sept. 27.—Because of a dispute over his weight, and of his refusal to pay a wager he had made regarding it, Henry Hahn, a Hoboken youth, was stabbed to death today. Sixteen-year-old Ernest Trusch, of 113 Charlton street, Manhattan, is charged with the murder. The prisoner, his victim, and three friends had been drinking in Hahn's store, at 509 First street, Hoboken, last evening, and early to-day, when the party was about to break up, a dispute arose over Hahn's weight. "I'll bet \$5 I weigh 135 pounds," declared Hahn, as he stepped upon the scales.

The register showed that Hahn had lost by ten pounds, and Trusch demanded the amount of the wager. Hahn refused to pay, and in the quarrel which followed Trusch, who is charged, drew a knife and slashed Hahn across the throat.

ITEMS FROM ABROAD.

Paris, Sept. 27.—Capt. J. C. Fremont, the American naval attaché here, has been recalled, and it is understood, receive the command of a battle ship.

Potsdam, Prussia, Sept. 27.—Prince Charles Gustav von Thurn und Taxis, a lieutenant in the Prussian Foot Guards, fell downstairs at the regimental quarters today and fractured his skull, dying almost instantly.

Dresden, Saxony, Sept. 27.—The King of Saxony, seated at a meeting of the Saxon cabinet today, at which it was decided to continue the allowance made to the former Crown Prince Louis, now Madame Toselli. The king, however, announced that he intended to take her youngest child from her.

Shanghai, Sept. 27.—Boxers have burned the mission stations at Nankangine, murdered an Italian missionary and several native converts at Ta-tai village, and looted and burned the mission at Kancheow. In Kancheow, the missionaries of the province have taken refuge at Kifu and telegraphed to Peking for assistance.

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